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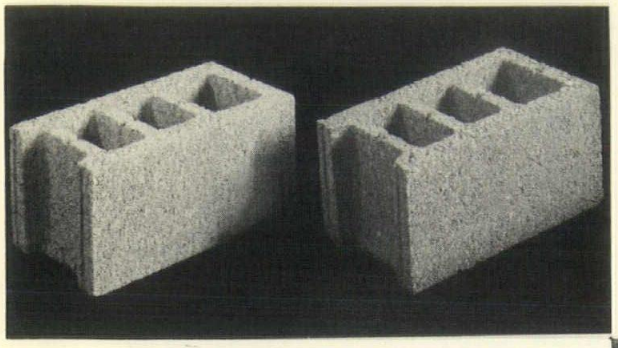

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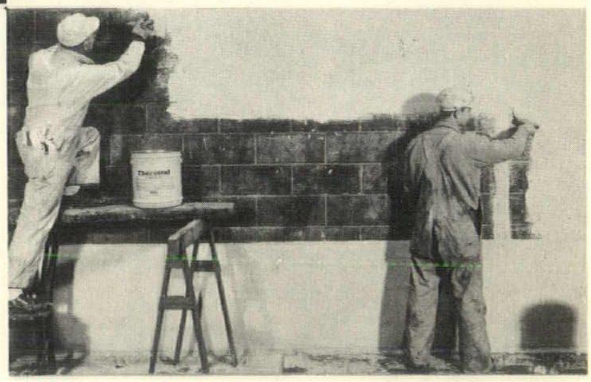

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How to Profit Most From This Magazine

This magazine is designed to keep you posted on one important segment of our State's activities. Here are a few reminders on how to profit most from each issue as you receive it.

1. Leaf through every page of *Skyline*. Then go back and read carefully those particular articles that are of special interest to you. This magazine hopes to help every Rhode Island industry, business and home.

2. Check the advertisements. Reputable companies, doing business in Rhode Island and contributing to the over-all progress of our State, are offering necessary goods and services through these pages.

3. Route this magazine to others. Executives, plant superintendents and people in general can benefit as you do from the facts and ideas presented in this magazine.

4. Write us your suggestions, criticisms and comments. Letters to the editor will be published, and will help shape *Skyline's* future issues.

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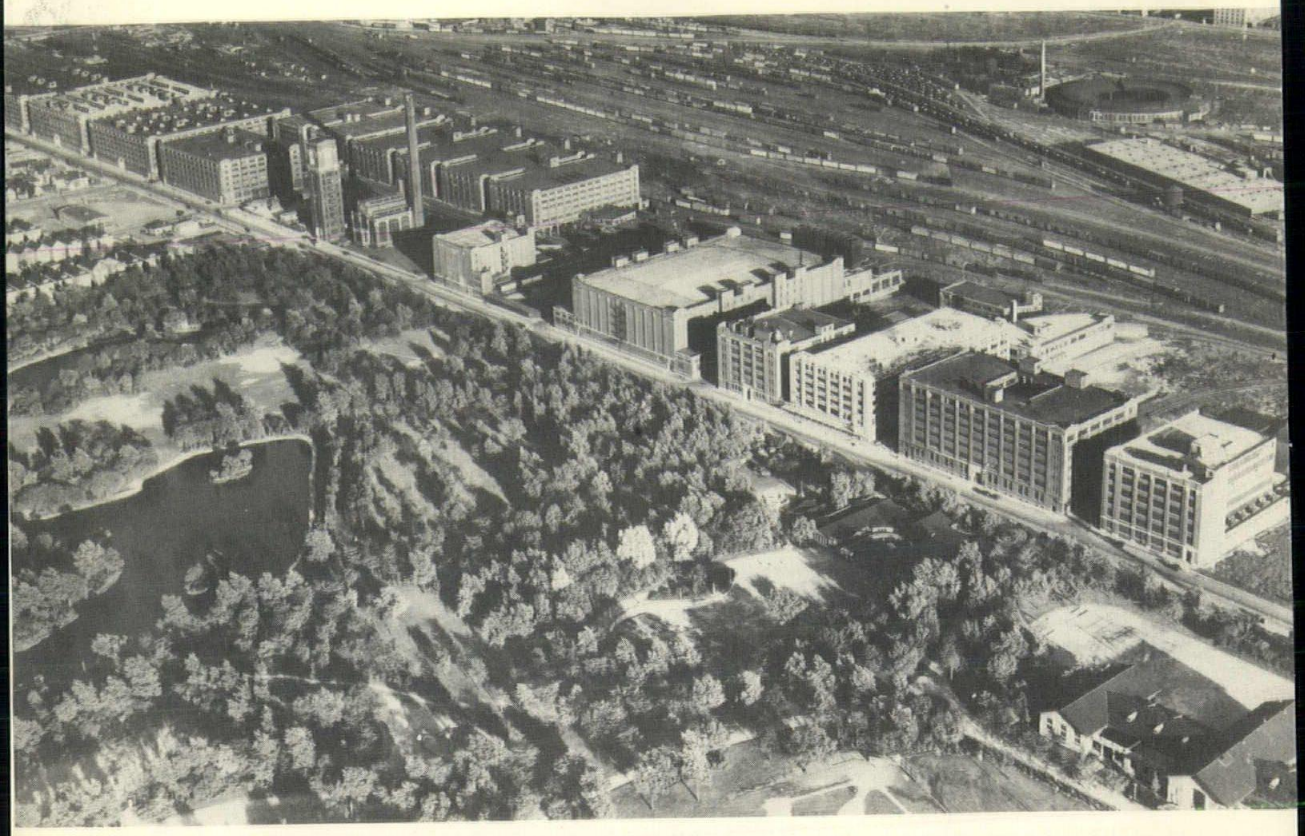

PROVED industrial development is 42-year-old Central Manufacturing District in Chicago, which pioneered planned progress of this kind. Note excellent separation of park in the foreground, and the rail yard in the background.

NEW HEALTH for RHODE ISLAND INDUSTRY

Rhode Islanders don't talk like Texans. No one around here is likely to make extravagant boasts or predict bonanzas for this rocky little State. But lately the carefully qualified remarks of Rhode Island businessmen disclose a growing spirit of cautious optimism about the state's economic future. There is hopeful talk among businessmen, planning experts, bankers and architects in this area, with the words "industrial development" frequently recurring.

A stalwart Dallas banker once accurately predicted in his home town that "here in twenty years will be the busiest inter-section in the state."

But Rhode Islanders aren't in the habit of baring their necks to the breeze in that fashion. Two centuries of experience with industrialism here has shown the people of this state that unrestricted growth presents plenty of problems. "We don't hope to become a Detroit or Pitts-

burgh," says one planning expert conservatively, "but for the reaching of reasonable objectives, the future looks awfully bright."

Most of the men agree that fully cooperative planning is essential to healthy growth for the state's economy, and that the architects' and city planners' role best begins with the earliest program efforts.

Rhode Island is nearly half a century behind the Grand-daddy of large-scale industrial district projects, the Chicago Central Manufacturing District. This District, operated privately under a three-man trusteeship, sells land to industrial firms, and designs and erects suitable buildings for immediate sale, lease or amortized payment. It finances as much as 80 per cent of the cost of land purchases, and maintains its own staff of engineers and architects.

Earliest construction by the Chicago CMD was of closely-grouped, multi-storied structures, now ivy-laden. Newest developments are made use of to allow greater flexibility of industries, space for one-story plants permitting straight line production, and space for off-street parking and loading. Banks, a business man's club and other services have now moved in close by.

Rhode Island's cautious approach to industrial development of this kind reaps the advantage of the trials and errors of the trail-blazers. Other projects undertaken in Minneapolis, Kansas City, Los Angeles and the

PIONEER in Rhode Island industrial design is California Artificial Flower Company, planned by Albert Harkness of Providence years ago. Located on a main thoroughfare, the building is outside the congested area but carries a tower as a powerful advertising display. Whole plant is efficient, and keyed to use of building as showroom-salesroom.

TYPICAL of good modern buildings now going up around Rhode Island is this Bulova Watch Company plant designed by Michael Traficante, East Providence. Large (50,000 sq. ft.), with continuous stretches of glass as long as 200 feet, the building has utility core in part basement to permit uninterrupted production line on ground level.

TWO EXAMPLES OF WORK BY RHODE ISLAND ARCHITECTS FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE OF THIS AREA.

GEORGIA. Architect Oliver W. Fontaine of Woonsocket designed this simple one-story knitting plant in area that permits plenty of development. Construction high-lights are concrete slabs that are pre-cast on horizontal, then tilted into position. Special features result from fusion of ideas of architect and of plant operations officer.

PUERTO RICO. This plant, designed by Barker and Turoff, Providence, is practical interpretation of modern industrial needs. Water from near-by river is carried over the roof to give efficient, low-cost air-conditioning. Any wall may be easily moved and first future plans will connect area between two plants shown here.

Newton Industrial Center in Massachusetts, all considered outstanding efforts in this field, offer us blueprints for our own industrial development.

Here, of course, industrial growth, to be healthy, will in many cases have to be industrial *re*-development to avoid and correct some of the evils of our lop-sided growth in the past. Compliance with national civilian defense regulations imposes added restrictions unthought of in pre-atom bomb days.

The most significant recent step forward in Rhode Island is the formation of the Development Corporation that provides a pool of private capital to finance industrial expansion. The legislation recently enacted to permit this

action is looked upon, according to Lachlan F. Blair of the State's Development Council, as the most progressive in the country. Two states, Connecticut and Michigan, already have sent experts here to study and copy it, Blair reports.

"Everybody is behind this", comments the president of the local chapter of the American Institute of Banking, Norman T. Worthington. "There's no question that the men backing this financial effort are capable of pushing it through and have the interest of the community in mind."

With a pool of skilled architects on hand and financing prospectively available, with the State's specialized staff in the R. I. Development Council ready to be called upon, and with cities and towns of the state expressing their interest through establishment of their own development commissions and agencies, the welcome mat is not only out, but brushed and waiting.

Providence's redevelopment agency has already designated space in the Point Street—Hospital Street area for specialized industrial use, and is now asking for estimates on its conversion. East Providence, South Kingstown and Coventry are pushing separate bids for new industries, and Cranston has just suggested the offering of city-owned land to industrial users under certain conditions. Most other communities in the state are already at work on similar plans or rapidly getting into line.

When new building actually gets underway, what kind of structures may the state expect to see? From one Rhode Island architect's point of view, plants may well be constructed in single-story units 200 by 200 feet in size for best all-around use. They should be designed with easily movable walls to accommodate plant expansion in any direction, concrete floors to allow even heaviest machinery or indoor loading, ceilings high enough and strong enough to carry heavy-duty cranes, and with a practicable minimum of vertical supports to provide greatest uninterrupted operation space, this probably-typical architect believes. Adequate utilities expansion must also be provided, with all service installations such as boilers and employees' lockers centrally located, preferably on a mezzanine level, to allow continuous straight-line production flow below.

Here are three of the current proposals we hear regarding possible immediate steps to carry the state closer to lively industrial development:

(*Continued page* 6)

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(Continued)

1. Adequate machinery should be created to bring together representatives of the new financing agency, the state's development agency, and all local planning councils. Before competition for new industry gets out of hand, everyone should first agree on what distinctive local benefits each town can judiciously offer.

2. Builders, bankers, and architects should be represented at local levels in all planning councils.

3. Local architects, to insure best use of architectural services available in the state, should compile through their chapter of the AIA a file of special skills and experience of members to be placed in the hands of the R. I. Development Council and other key centers.

Rhode Island's traditional conservativism doesn't quite permit the free-swinging impatience with obstacles expressed by Texan Leslie Stemmons, when he was accused of stepping on toes to bring industrial improvement to his state. He answered, ". . . you move your toes out of the way before we stomp your feet off up to the ankles." In Rhode Island, when people become enthusiastic; well—they just don't talk like Texans.

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The WINNER

It certainly looks as though the "generation of eager young men" mentioned by Conrad Green elsewhere in this issue can be found right here in Rhode Island.

The new cover design of "Skyline" is a result of a competition at the Rhode Island School of Design. The winner turned out to be Bob Keating (above), himself an architect-to-be. The second prize winner, Dick Swallow, is also an architectural student. Both young men are Rhode Islanders, appropriately enough.

The judges for the cover design competition had half-expected, as any of us might, that a student of illustration or advertising would be the winner, but were pleasantly surprised at the results.

This cover design of Bob Keating's was chosen for three reasons: it is simple to reproduce the general identifying design from month to month, it can show variety, and it reflects the clean-cut precision of the magazine's basic interest—good building and construction.

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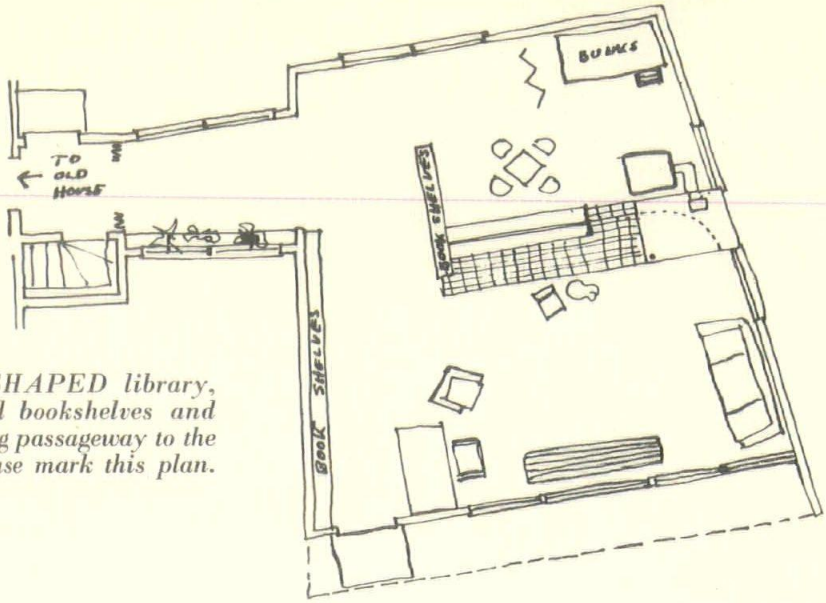


PIE-SHAPED library, T-shaped bookshelves and connecting passageway to the main house mark this plan.

A Poet's Corner

Winfield Scott is a poet, a scholar and a family man. For too long, he said, he had worked in an unheated shack, and had left his library scattered throughout the state. So he employed Ira Rakatansky, a Rhode Island architect, to design an annex to his home. He asked that the annex, first of all, be large enough to house his 4000 books, his workshop, and a playroom for his children; secondly, be harmonious with his 200 year old home.

BAREFOOT CHILDREN accentuate the spaciousness and warmth of the poet's corner. Their own playroom is behind the bookshelves.

Mr. Rakatansky was not at all daunted by these double-bound specifications. He planned a spacious trapezoid-shaped room 29′ 3″ wide at the front, 22′ wide at the back, and 28′ 6″ deep. With a T-shaped bookshelf partition sufficient to accommodate all the volumes comfortably, he divided the room into two areas. Now, while the children have their own double bunks, play table and toy shelves in the back, Mr. Scott has his own working desk and easy chairs in the front.

A deep brick fireplace provides both warmth and atmosphere and a bright blue, burnt orange color scheme with a natural honey-colored fir floor finishes the artistic scheme.

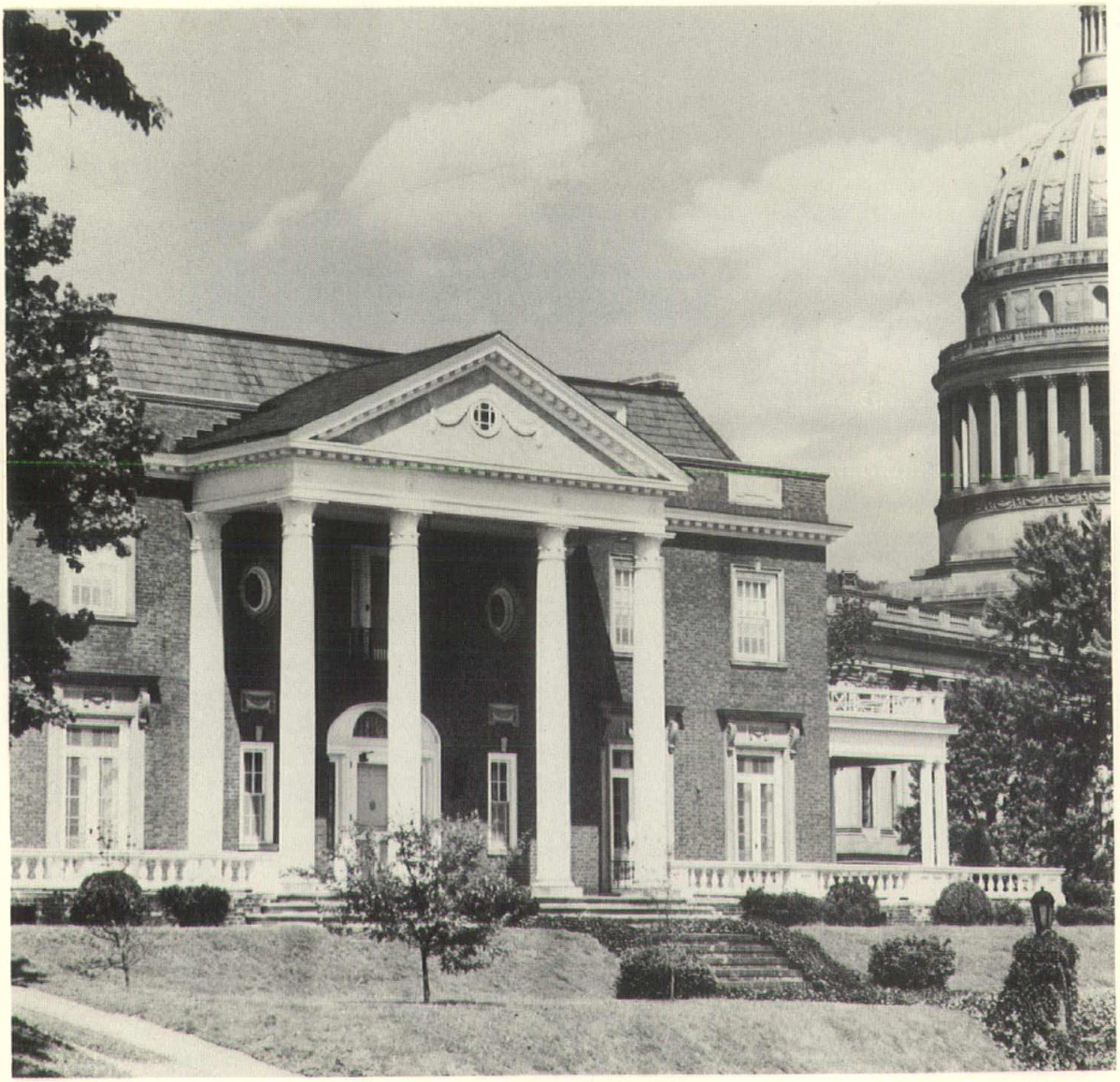
The next problem—to have harmony between the old home and the new annex despite the two century time-gap in styles—was successfully accomplished. The library's visor-like, carefully calculated front overhang—though actually designed to break the hot summer sun rays while permitting total absorption of the winter ones—seems a contemporary translation of the early American dormer windows. The honey-colored wood exterior walls (the same as the interior floor) blend naturally with a farm and its wooded surroundings. The wedge shape of the new annex, accented by the sloping roof, creates the attractive appearance of deep perspective, and makes the structure compelling in its own right, but not obtrusive or detracting from the main home.

To provide all-season comfort with abundant natural light, Rakatansky designed a window wall and specified the use of a new Rhode Island product, Thermowall, a complete factory-built wall equipped with Thermopane insulating glass in standard sizes. For easy circulation of fresh air, there are three movable units in the large front Thermowall. The architect also inconspicuously installed a boiler behind the fireplace because he could not add to the heating system load of the main house.

Now as it stands complete, the building fulfills all Mr. Scott's desires, and he was the first to congratulate architect Rakatansky on the construction of what can be rightfully termed a poet's own corner.

LARGE "THERMOWALL" unit strikes note for this modern annex as it stands outlined against the 200-year-old house.

How About . . .



WEST VIRGINIA'S Georgian Colonial mansion, completed in 1925 in the shadow of the Capitol building, is typical of the gracious southern plantation, with its high porticoed entrance leading into a wide reception hall.

• • an EXECUTIVE MANSION

for Rhode Island

Some thirty-four states of the 48 in the union boast an executive mansion for its governor. Rhode Island has no such mansion, nor is there any plan for one.

It doesn't seem necessary, at first glance, that any kind of an official home is needed for our governors during their term of office. Rhode Island is so small that *any* citizen lives within commuting distance from the State capitol.

But a survey in other capitols shows that a governor's mansion serves a much more important function than simply providing domestic quarters for the state's chief executive. A governor's mansion provides suitable space and surroundings for official state receptions and entertainment of distinguished out-of-state and foreign visitors. An executive mansion, in short, is the center of all the important social functions that are an integral part of a governor's job.

The executive mansion of the State of Washington is typical. It is fitted out with a ballroom, reception halls and a banquet room, as well as offices and living quarters for the governor.

The official residence in New York State contains a state dining room, a reception room, a room for showing motion pictures and even a swimming pool.

In the colonial mansion for West Virginia's governors, the entire west wing is used for the reception of state visitors, the east wing is maintained for the governor and his family.

No man elected to a governorship can be expected to come into office with a private household equipped to meet the social demands of state. The substitutes provided by this state, with no official residence, appear makeshift, at best, to many people.

Yet, Rhode Island hardly seems to be in a position to build a new special executive mansion, mainly because we can make better and more urgent use of our tax dollars. Even the purchase and conversion by the State of some home now standing seems out of place at the present time. Certainly other expenditures are more important; here as elsewhere.

In rich California, plans have long been in the making for a new executive mansion. In fact, the site itself already has been purchased. But Governor Warren has refused to allow construction of a new mansion to proceed until the state is more current in its program for construction of educational and welfare institutions.

Yet for Rhode Island there is possibly a low-cost means of establishing a governor's mansion. The idea is suggested by other areas where many such official residences have been donated to the state by private citizens. These gifts usually were made to preserve an historically important building as well as to provide suitable quarters for official families.

Rhode Island certainly has many such historically beautiful and important homes. More than a few are within minutes of the Capitol itself. Scores of these mansions already have been torn down or "converted" into makeshift apartment buildings. Other mansions seem to be headed for the same fate.

Preserving these proud memorials of our State's history is a desirable end in itself. The use of one as an executive mansion would make the memorial a living, useful monument.

There may be good reasons why Rhode Island could not accept even that kind of an offer of a mansion for the Governor's official use, but more than one Rhode Islander undoubtedly would like to see that offer made.

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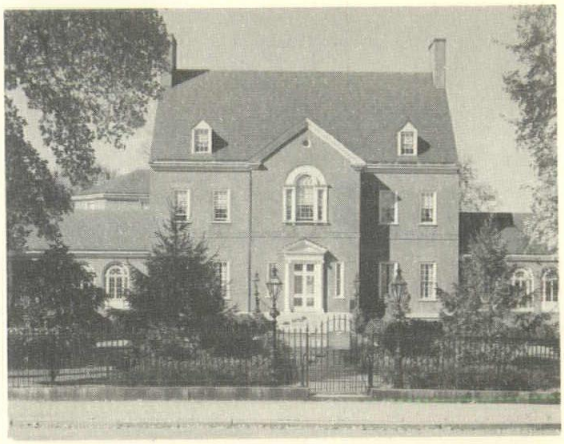

MARYLAND'S people split their loyalties between North and South during the Civil War, but in 1866 a Baltimore newspaper made an impassioned project to build this governor's mansion, which helped to unify the people once again.

SOUTH DAKOTA'S country-style mansion, situated on a 40-acre plot of landscaped grounds, was completed in 1936 with funds from the Public Works Administration. It is unpretentious but highly practicable.

CALIFORNIA, the home of Hollywood and avant-garde living, paradoxically provides a violently Victorian mansion for its chief executive, who refuses to move into anything better at the moment.

NEW YORK uses an old mansion built in 1830, now equipped with offices, children's play room, movie projection room and swimming pool. Current talk is of moving the executive residence to more adequate grounds.

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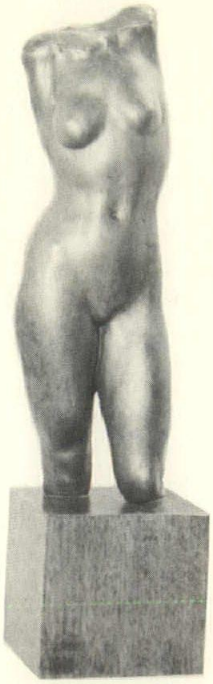


"Distinction between the fine arts and the useful arts must be forgotten . . ."

CAN MODERN "FIT IN"?

We know now that the continual "revival of revivals" of ancient architectural styles helps to stagnate our whole social progress. Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay on art stated the case clearly a century ago. "Beauty", he said, "must come back to the useful arts, and the distinction between the fine and useful arts forgotten. . . . In nature, all is useful, all beautiful. . . . Beauty will not repeat in England and America its history in Greece. It will come as always, unannounced, and spring up between the feet of brave and earnest men."

Architecture today has returned to the realities of life today. Our new architect "starts with living people and their needs, physical and emotional, and tries to meet them as squarely as possible, with the best procurable means." We welcome technical improvements in methods, materials and equipment and use them directly, frankly and economically. We seek style while avoiding "styles." We no longer imitate.

Current architectural problems are being solved freely and flexibly—and people are *enjoying* the results. They see buildings (not burdened down with stylistic claims) which are an outgrowth of their basic needs and of their wide range of activities.

President Conant of Harvard reported in January of this year that "what eighteen years ago was a startling novelty (in building design) is accepted now as basic doctrine in all architectural schools in the United States."

Soon a whole new generation of eager young men will assume the lead in the architectural

"This conglomeration of average buildings
. . . lives in harmony . . .
and actually offers
a distinctive visual stimulation . . ."

profession. Their mission is to free the development of design from the last shackles of historical imitation.

The big question, asked over and over again, is this: "Can the new designs 'fit in'?" "Can they exist side by side, and agreeably, with the other forms of architecture that already surround us? The answer is a definite "Yes." Buildings of all periods "fit in"—they always have. The degree of success with which they do fit in depends on two things: first, the quality of the buildings themselves and, secondly, the quality of their relationship to each other.

Prove this point to yourself by making a casual visit to the middle campus at Brown University. Here you see nine buildings grouped around an open-ended, tree-studded court. Few of the buildings, by themselves, are worthy of particular praise. The styles displayed run the whole gamut of local architectural history. But you see that the variety of form, color and material enriches the pattern of their overall relationship. (*Continued page* 16)

CONRAD GREEN'S work has been recognized by national magazines. In planning a special annex to one of the best-known historic buildings in this area, he articulated the opinions expressed here.

(*Continued*)

(University Hall is a handsome exception to these run of the mill buildings. Significantly, it is far more than its size and location that lends so much to the character and vitality of the campus. It gives simplicity and dignity.)

Yet these conglomerate average buildings not merely live in harmony with one another, but actually offer a distinctive visual stimulation.

This example of buildings that "fit in" does not include one "modern" building. But isn't it likely that even a second-rate "modern" building on the site, say, of Rhode Island Hall would be preferred to Rhode Island Hall itself?

In no sense should conformity in architecture be our goal. Instead we must direct our efforts at improving the quality of our new buildings with artful regard for the buildings now standing.

There is no doubt that many so-called "modern" buildings are of inferior design, are emotionally poverty-stricken. It is this poverty that justifiably bothers people. It also emphasizes the real need for imagination and inspiration in our architecture. Logic and technique are not enough. Art and Science must be brought into balance in our contemporary architecture.

The question may remain: "Can we completely overlook tradition?" Of course not. But tradition is something alive and growing. Ideas about beauty have always changed with the social and scientific changes that affect our lives. Constant interpretation of these changes is the best foundation for our tradition—and for our genuine architecture.

At the same time, respect for the vitality and courage which has gone into the beautiful works of the past still must be a source of inspiration for today's architecture.

We Rhode Islanders have our own vigorous tradition. It is distinguished by independent thought, by innovation, by individualism. These qualities have been less characteristic of our architecture than of some of our other pursuits. But these same qualities are those that can give true direction to our building efforts. To ignore these qualities will lead to stagnation and imitation.

Any imitation of our inheritance seems cheap, lazy and tawdry. Okakuro Kazuko put it: "Would that we loved the ancients enough so that we might copy them less."

book review

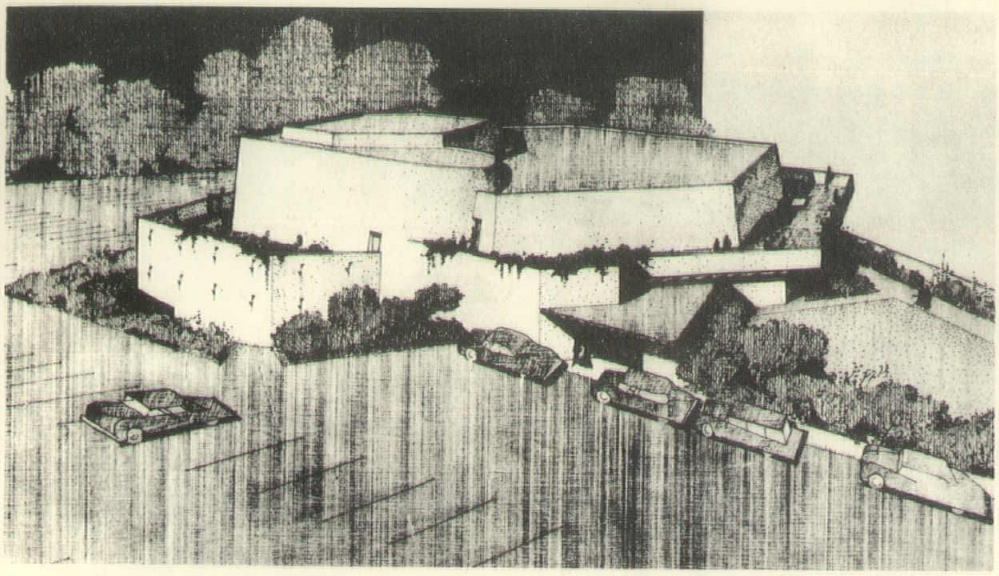
A. E. Simonson, A.I.A.

Taliesin Drawings—Frank Lloyd Wright, *comments by Edgar Kaufman, Jr., published by Wittenborn, Schultz, Inc., N. Y. 64 pages, $2.50.*

Like a breath of spring air, any publication of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright is invigorating and always promises to reveal scores of new and exciting architectural vistas. This particular book, a collection of drawings executed at Taliesin or Taliesin West, also provides that quality almost impossible to capture by photographing existing structures—the magic spectacles of Wright's poetic draughting which reveals the basic elements that permeate each of his projects and gives to each its typical feeling of organic freshness.

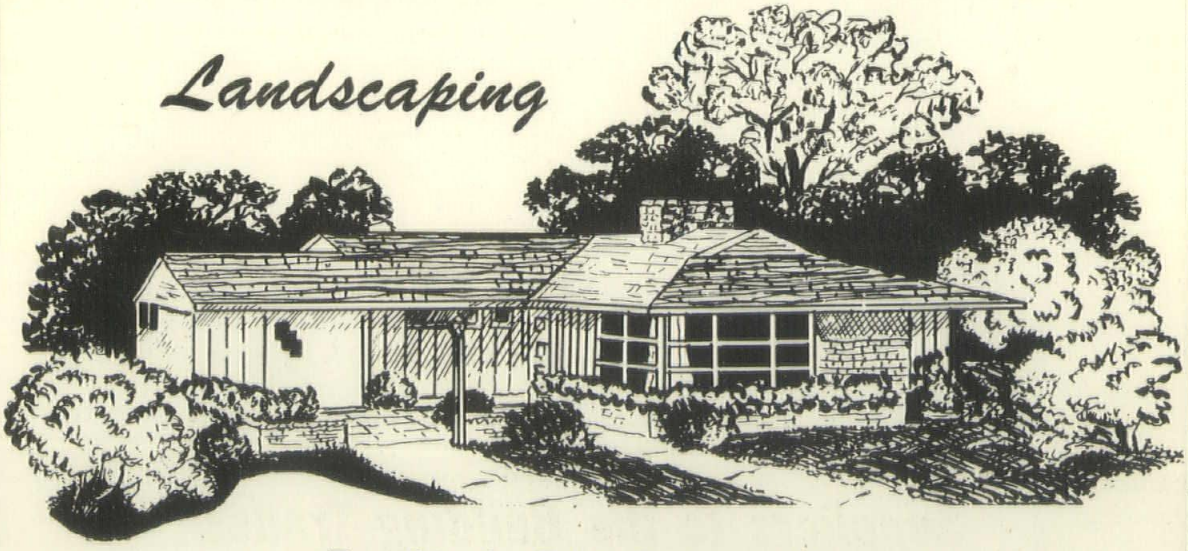
Most of the examples illustrated are residential but always designed "of the land and for the life in the building." Like the blithe spirit Ariel, one can hover now over a promontory off Long Island—now over the rolling hills of Michigan or Iowa—now over the vaste Arizona desert. Wright evokes the pervading genius of the land and allows it to impart an unmistakable character to each of his schemes. But Ariel is restless and two projects for bridges, one for San Francisco Bay and the elaborate composition of two counter balancing triple-decked spans combined with a thousand foot high pylon broadcasting tower proposed for the golden triangle of Pittsburgh, a self-serving parking garage and a new theater for Hartford, Connecticut, provides added evidence of Wright's ability to transform the most utilitarian building into special poetry.

The nineteen structures that are illustrated have been selected with consummate care to illustrate the vigorous quality of Mr. Wright's work, but the fundamental joy in the publication consists in the music of the graphic line. Here are fugues of triangle or circle—rectangle or ellipse which lack only in the quality of the reproductions. The general format and the page lay-outs, however, are handsome indeed and like the cover the composer irresistibly leads one through the book successively revealing moments of springtime in architecture.



PROPOSED new theatre for Hartford, Connecticut, has "many thoughtful but uncomplicated new devices," and so becomes less ponderous as a visible mass of building, and as a working organism. Like other works of Mr. Wright, it sticks close to human scale. (From *Taliesin Drawings.*)

Landscaping



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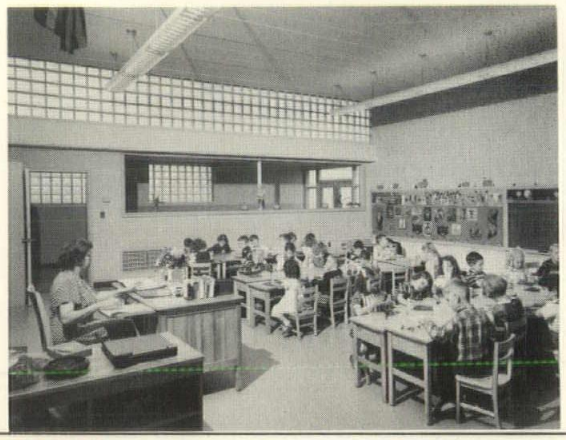

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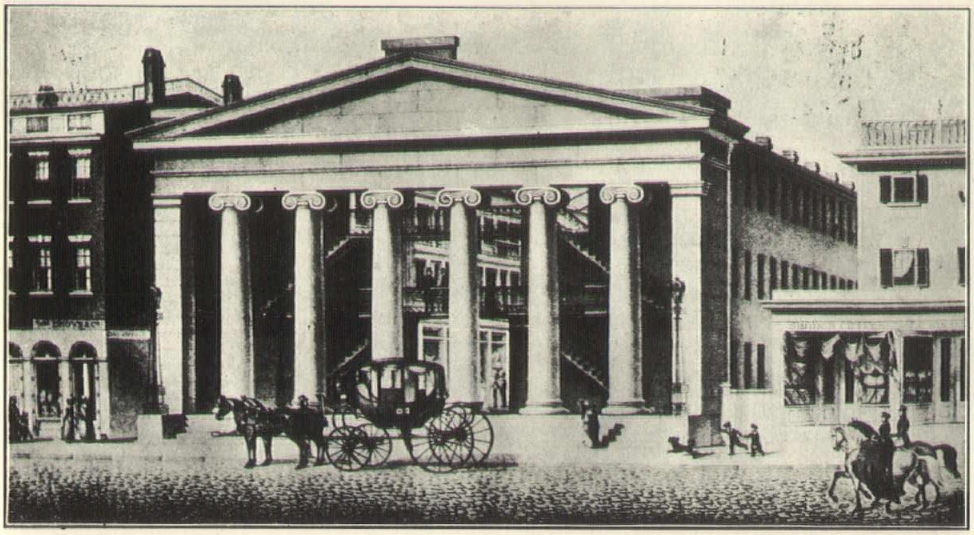

"Nothing Like It Anywhere"

as told by John Hutchins Cady
Rhode Island architect and antiquarian

Fondly defined by Providence natives as "the place they pipe Christmas carols from" or "the dryest route between Westminster and Weybosset Street", the Providence Arcade sits inconspicuously, but in grandeur, in the heart of the downtown business district.

The Arcade is no insignificant structure. In the early 1800's, long before these United States began to evolve any architectural style of its own, some Providence men decided to build a Classical-type arched passageway for the practical purpose of housing many small shops. The construction was somehow undertaken by two separate entities: one of whom hired architect-builder James G. Bucklin; the other of whom hired Russell Warren, an architect of the Greek-Revival School.

The two architects at first worked together harmoniously on a basic design by Warren, calling for Greek (Ionic) colonnades at either end, each to be composed of six columns, 22 feet high, each weighing 12 tons. These massive one-piece monoliths, the largest in the United States for years to come, were cut by Joseph Olney and hauled on oxen-drawn sledges from Bear Rock Quarry in Johnston.

The men, however, violently disagreed on how to cap the columns with a cross beam ("crowning the entablature"). They could not happily effect any kind of a compromise, so each took one end and finished it according to his own taste. Bucklin's concept resulted in the Westminster Street "pedimented temple" motive, and Warren's in the "panelled attic" on Weybosset Street. There is neither "front" nor "back" as so many people debate.

Finally, in February, 1829, the *Manufacturers and Farmers Journal* issued the announcement: "This truly splendid Bazaar, said to be the most elegant and costly building of its kind in the United States, is now ready, completely finished and ready for the reception of tenants."

And the fame of the Providence Arcade grew so great that it is said to have inspired Noah Webster, in his dictionary definition of the ancient Greek temple-forum arcade form, to add a regional post-script:

"arcade: an arched or covered passageway or avenue, specif. ONE BETWEEN SHOPS."

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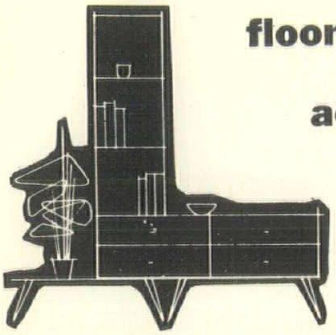

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a. i. a. news

Rhode Island members of the "A.I.A." are launching a unique program that could possibly mean the savings of millions of school-building dollars to communities throughout the nation.

In Newport, superintendent of schools Carl Porter-Shirley started the wheels turning when he suggested that there are probably tens of thousands of school buildings now existing with perfectly sound and sturdy exteriors, but with sadly inadequate class room facilities.

A special committee prepared a report based on Porter-Shirley's original idea, and the Rhode Island members of the A.I.A. agreed to re-design and supervise the re-modeling of a pilot plan classroom.

At present a committee of chapter member architects are well into the problem and final results are expected to develop this year.

There is no question that any recommodations of the A.I.A. will involve extensive re-building of classrooms that are now below the par of advanced school design. But at the same time, the opportunity to retain present foundations, frames and roofs of otherwise obsolete schools means tremendous savings in school construction and tremendous advances in education through more efficient teaching tools—the classrooms of America.

You'll be hearing more about architecture this year . . . from the men who design the homes, schools, and other buildings we use, the registered architects.

A program to help architects become more articulate is being launched by the American Institute of Architects, the 95-year old professional society to which most of the country's architects belong.

Not many people have a clear notion of how ideas are translated into stone and steel buildings. The architects hope, through such means as these issues of "Skylines," to make people as familiar with the job an architect does as they now are with refrigerators, oil heating and the neighborhood lumber yard.

The architects of the A.I.A. say a better understanding of when and how to put them to work is necessary if they are to do as good a job in homes, commercial and industrial buildings as they now do on schools, hospitals and churches.

The national public relations program will

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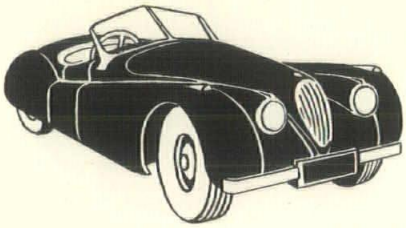

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(Continued)

begin by furnishing information about architects and the services they render. It will accent the architect's own role by emphasizing that the best publicity is a job well done.

Twelve new members have been elected to the A.I.A. in Rhode Island since January first of this year, it has been announced by the chapter secretary.

This is believed to be one of the largest groups admitted to membership since the local chapter was begun in 1875. The additions indicate a continued vitality of building design in this area.

Six Rhode Island architects were delegates at the New England regional meeting of the A. I. A. on March 14. These men were: Philip D. Creer, president of the state chapter, Peter Geddes, Samuel Morino, Milton Nelson, Knight D. Robinson and Lyman Slocum.

The producers Council was host to the architects at a special luncheon at the Harvard Club.

"Color in Architecture" was the feature discussion in the evening session, at which the nationally-known Julian Garnsey was moderator.

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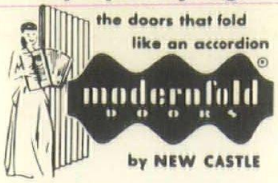

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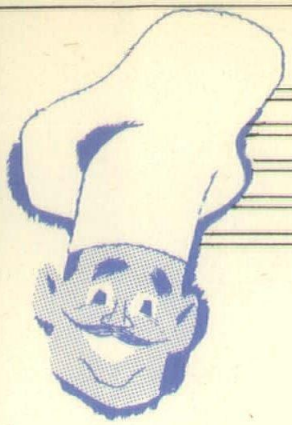

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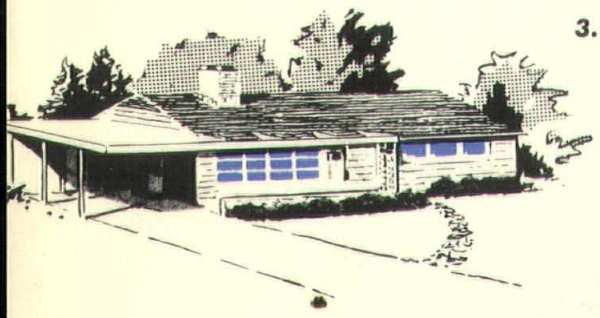

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